

IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY IN IRREGULAR AND REGULAR VERBS BY USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE

AN ARTICLE

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PONTIANAK
2017**

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' VOCABULARY IN IRREGULAR AND
REGULAR VERBS BY USING CROSSWORD PUZZLE**
(A Classroom Action Research at the Ninth Grade Students of MTsN 1 Pontianak in
Academic Year 2016/2017)

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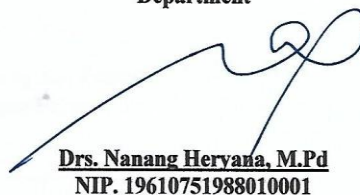
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Abstract

The aim of this research is to improve students' vocabulary, especially in understanding and writing past form. This research was conducted at the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017. In this research, the subject is class IX C that consists of 39 students. The researcher conducted a classroom action research. The data were collected by using direct and measurement technique. The tools of data collecting were observation checklist, field note, and test. Crossword puzzle was used as the technique in this research which was conducted in two cycles. The research findings showed that the mean score of students' vocabulary test in the first cycle was 71.57 and the second cycle was 86.41 which means it successfully passed the KKM. The improvements of this study were particularly in students' understanding past form and writing their sentences in simple past tense correctly.

Keywords: *Vocabulary, Irregular and Regular Verbs, Crossword Puzzle.*

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary plays an important role in the study foreign language. Richards and Renandya (2002:255) states that vocabulary is the basis to learners' language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Vocabulary cannot be separated from other elements of English in teaching learning process especially in junior high school, because vocabulary influences the ability of students in studying English language. The students can communicate and express their ideas by the words that they have stored in mind.

Based on the researcher's observation during teaching practice in MTsN 1 Pontianak, the English teacher faces the students with lack of vocabulary, especially in Irregular Verb and Regular

Verb. The students could not change the verbs in past form. Consequently, they become less active in the learning process. The students tend to find difficulties in understanding and writing the sentences in irregular and regular verb.

In the teaching learning process at the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak, the English teacher found some problems on the students' vocabulary. Based on the interview between the researcher and English teacher on 20th of August 2016, many students did not know the meaning of English words within the text. In addition, the students also wrote the wrong words of verb like they wrote all of the past form by using *-ed* at the ending. The researcher also did interview with some students on 10th of October 2016, they said that in teaching learning

process, the teacher rarely used media or interesting activities. He also tends to depend on the textbook and LKS from the school. Interesting learning activities like games also rarely implemented. Those situations contribute to the students' attitude toward the lesson.

In improving students' achievement, the technique has an important role in teaching learning process. The teacher should find good technique in order to improve students' vocabulary. A technique is used by the teacher should be enjoyable. The teacher must use the appropriate technique that can ease students to acquire the vocabulary. In this case, the researcher taught vocabulary through crossword puzzle and wish that it can be an alternative strategy for teacher to gain their knowledge in teaching vocabulary and also the students improve their vocabulary.

Wright et al (2006:1) states that "game means an activity which is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others." By using game, the students try to solve the questions. Game refresh their mind and motivate them in learning vocabulary. According to Allen (1983:52) game is helpful because it can raise the students' awareness that certain words are important and necessary. Game is one of methods that can make students enjoy the learning process. The students can do both learning new vocabulary and playing game. The teacher also can use dictionary as the media in teaching learning process.

There are many games which can be used in teaching learning process. One of the game is crossword puzzle. Through crossword puzzle, the students can acquire new vocabulary and improve it. Crossword puzzle can accommodate the

students' words and make them acquire the new ones. Therefore, the researcher suggests crossword puzzle as a teaching technique for Junior High School students at MTsN 1 Pontianak.

Dhand (2008:55) explained the advantages of crossword puzzles are: (1) The technique of crossword puzzle is a good way to teach and enrich vocabulary because the definition or synonyms of the words are right there to provide reinforcement. (2) Crossword puzzle can also be used to encourage the use of dictionary or thesaurus or to learn terminology used in a particular subject. They can be used as a quiz or review at the end of a unit/chapter or a lesson. (3) Crossword puzzles can be easily made by the teacher and presented to students.

The question of this research was how does crossword puzzle improve students' vocabulary at the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017, especially in understanding and writing the past form.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the purpose of this research was to improve students' vocabulary in understanding and writing sentences in past form by using crossword puzzle to the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017, the researcher used classroom action research which was appropriate method to be used to solve the problem of this research. Classroom action research is research carried out in the classroom by the teacher of the course, mainly with the purpose of solving a problem or improving the teaching/learning process. Burns (2010) stated that CAR can be a valuable way to improve our teaching skills and get more understanding of ourselves as teachers, our classrooms and our students. The central idea of the action part of CAR is to

intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice.

This research conducted in two. In each cycle, there will be some steps that must be done by the researcher. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) cited in Burns (2010), there are four phases in CAR: Planning, Acting, Observing and Reflecting.

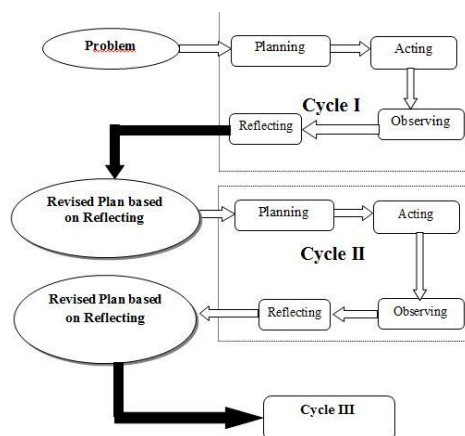


Figure 1: Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) cited in Burns (2010:9)

In order to make the cycle above clear, below is the explanation of those steps:

1. In planning phase, the researcher will prepare the lesson plan, teaching material, observation checklist, and field notes before teaching learning process.
2. In acting phase, the researcher as an observer. The researcher and teacher will collaborate to explain the material that has been prepared as well as to observe the entire event that will be happened during the class. After the teacher explains the lesson, the students will do crossword puzzle in pair.
3. In observing phase is to see how the activity is running; and to gather the

data as the information to be assessed. The statements in the observation checklist were the expectation of the researcher toward the achievement the students had within the process that will measure the strengths and the weaknesses of the process of teaching learning.

4. In reflecting phase, the researcher will recall all the information during teaching learning process. From the process of teaching learning the researcher gets some important feedback. The feedback is very important in re-planning the next cycle. It can change a certain action or add some more actions in order to improve the teaching learning process.

After getting the result of the test, the teacher reflected the students' comprehension in form of score. The result of the observation checklist was translated into sentences. It was used as tools to gather the information. Then, the teacher combined all the information they had collected from the tools. Finally, the researcher determined whether there was another cycle to improve the result and the process or not.

The participants of this research are the students of MTsN 1 Pontianak at the ninth grade in the academic year 2016/2017. The researcher chooses the students who sit in class C because they have lack vocabulary especially in Irregular Verb and Regular Verb. In this class, there were 18 male students and 21 female students.

There were two kinds of techniques used by the researcher. They are direct and measurement techniques. Observation checklist and field note were used for the direct technique. As to measure the students' achievement, the researcher used vocabulary test with 20 questions.

Observation checklist table is a form of table that consists of the action applied by the researcher to watch the object carefully in order to notice the atmosphere of the class. The result of observation will be analyzed by observation checklist as a guidance to notice how the uses of crossword puzzle to improve students' vocabulary.

Field notes will be used to notes the students behavior and everything happen in the classroom that does not involve in the observation checklist. It will record the meanings that students attach to their behavior, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on the process of teaching and learning.

To know whether teaching vocabulary through crossword puzzle was the effective technique or not in teaching learning process, the researcher conducted observation checklist and field note in every meeting, and then scored the students' understanding by giving assessment.

To get students' mean score, the researcher measured it by using the following formula:

$$M = \frac{\sum fx}{N} \quad \dots\dots (1)$$

Note: M= the mean score of the students

$\sum fx$ = the total score of students

N = the total of students in the classroom

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In conducting this research, the researcher applied Classroom Action Research. This method of this research was intended to solve the problems found in the classroom. The problem found the

ninth grade students in class C of MTs N 1 Pontianak wrote incorrect past form and sentence in simple past tense. The implementation of crossword puzzle in this research was to improve students' vocabulary especially in understanding and writing sentence by using Irregular Verb and Regular Verb.

This research was conducted in two cycles. Every cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stage as Classroom Action Research procedures. In the first cycle, the acting stage was conducted in one meeting that was on Wednesday, February 22nd 2017 at 11.15 a.m to 12.35 p.m. The time for English subject was 80 minutes. There was one student absent in the first cycle. In the second cycle, the acting stage in one meeting that was on Saturday, February 25th 2017. The time for English subject was 80 minutes. There was no student absent in the second cycle.

First Cycle (February 22nd, 2017)

In the first cycle, the acting stage was conducted in one meeting that was on Wednesday, February 22nd, 2017. During implemementing crossword puzzle, the teacher and the researcher as the observer in teaching learning process to observe what actually happened in the classroom through observation checklist and field notes. The observer's view of the process was very important to avoid the subjectivity of the teacher. After the teacher gave the materials, implemented crossword puzzle, and the students did the test, the researcher computed the students' score and classified the mean score into the qualification. All those steps were done to obtain the research findings.

From the research finding and the data analysis on the first cycle of the research, the researcher concluded that it

was not satisfying. There were some obstacles happened in this cycle. More efforts would be needed to achieve the goals of the technique applied. The researcher decided to conduct the second cycle. The reflection of the first cycle was as follows:

- 1) The font size of list in irregular verb was so small. So, the students could not read clearly.
- 2) The students looked confused because they did not know the meaning of the clues. The students asked to the teacher repeatedly.
- 3) The teacher chose the member of the pairs by randomly. Some students did not work in pairs. It made the pairs which tend to be passive.
- 4) There were some students who were still busy with their own business. They did not concern with the lesson and also discussion.
- 5) The class was not conducive enough because there were disturbances from outside.
- 6) In doing individual assignment, the students opened the dictionary and asked the answer with their friends.
- 7) In the first cycle, only 14 students passed the minimum standard score with the mean score 71.57 and the percentage of the passing grade was 36.84%.

Those problems above led the researcher to conduct another cycle in order to improve everything in the teaching learning process; in term of the students' performance, teacher's performance, as well as the score of the students. In conclusion, the first cycle was not as good as expected. It needed to be revised, corrected, and improved in order to get the better result or improvement from the first cycle. Therefore, the researcher conducted the next cycle or

second cycle to revise and improve the shortages and weaknesses in the first cycle.

Second Cycle (February 25th, 2017)

Based on the problems in the previous cycle, the researcher decided to conduct the second cycle. The researcher set up new plan for cycle 2 and planned to start conducting on Saturday, February 25th 2017. Then, the teacher prepared the teaching-learning process and media for teaching vocabulary by using crossword puzzle, such as laptop, projector, and dictionary. After that, the teacher prepared observation checklist and field note.

The second cycle was conducted on Saturday, February 25th 2017 at 08.20 to 09.40. The preparation of the teacher when the teacher came to the classroom was good. The teacher started the class by leading the students to pray together, greeting, checking the students' attendance. On that day, all the students were present. It means that 39 students in the classroom.

The researcher noted some findings in the second cycle during the acting stage of the classroom activities. The findings are as follows:

- 1) There was no noise and disturbance from other students from other classes. The teaching learning process was conducive enough.
- 2) The students seemed more excited to do the activities that on day. They felt comfortable and excited in the classroom.
- 3) The students were very focused on the clues. They looked interested with the clues.
- 4) Most of the members of the pairs focused on their pairs and on their roles. They were more responsible to their pairs. The teacher noted

none of them talked to other members of other pairs.

5) In the test, the students did it well; meaning they did not cheat by seeing their friends' work or talking with their friends. They focused on their own handouts of test. The class was quiet while they were doing the test.

The acting stage of the second cycle was run better than the first one. The students had done it better than the previous one. They were more excited with the activities in the classroom, and more concern to the material. Overall, the process of the second cycle was improved; it was better than the first cycle. The problems was limited, even the process was almost perfect.

Based on the field note, the observer noted some findings based on the process of the teaching learning. Firstly, the students looked very enthusiastic to begin the teaching learning process. It was shown from the students when they prepared the projector before the teacher came to the class. Secondly, teacher was more confidence in delivering the material, giving more explanation and example, motivating the students, and also leading the students to the the discussion. The next, the students were more active and it was better than the first cycle. There was no more students who were busy with their own business; all of them were focused on the activity. The last, in the second cycle, both teacher and the students have done better than the previous cycle.

The researcher concluded that the second cycle of the research was successful. All the expectations of the teaching learning process and the reflecting actions from the first cycle improved. It can be seen from the result of students' test. The process were better than the first cycle. The successfulness of

the cycles convinced the researcher to stop the cycle.

The results of the two cycles indicated the improvement of students' vocabulary by using crossword puzzle. The students were able to answer it correctly and write their own sentence. After applying crossword puzzle, the students could easily remembered the meaning of English words and past form. They could differentiate the form between irregular and regular verbs.

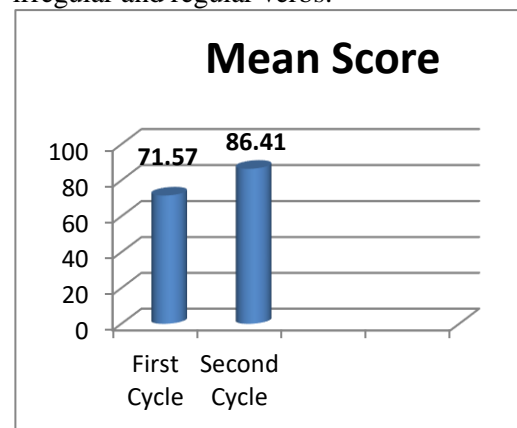


Table 2. Mean Score

The researcher answered the research problem. The purpose of this research is to find out whether crossword puzzle can improve students' vocabulary. There was students' score improvement that refers to the comparison in two cycles. The improvement can be seen from the mean score 71.57 (1st cycle) to 86.41 (2nd cycle). Moreover, the improvement which is shown from the students' score shows that in the last meeting of the implementation of crossword puzzle. There were nine students whose score was below 78, which was the criteria minimum standard score. The score on the second cycle was very different from the first cycle.

Based on the students' achievement score, it was clear that the students' vocabulary increased from the first cycle

to the second cycle. Moreover, the observation checklist and the field note also showed the significant improvement in teaching learning process. The students were paying attention to the material, enthusiastic, and active in guessing the clues. Based on the result, the researcher decided to stop the cycle.

In conclusion, the researcher determined that this research was satisfactory. The students' vocabulary specifically in differentiate past form and

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

Based on the research finding, the researcher concluded that there was an improvement of students' mean score after applying crossword puzzle. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles with four stages planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The students kept improving step by step in each cycle until they achieved the standard minimum score. In the first cycle, the students did not achieve the standard minimum score (KKM) in this school. In the first cycle, the students' mean score was 71.57. Therefore, based on the reflection from the first cycle, it was necessary to conduct the second cycle. In the second cycle the indicators of success were fulfilled and the action was stop. The students' mean score in this cycle was 86.41. The teaching learning process improved through the use of crossword puzzle in teaching learning vocabulary. It was proved by the result of the field note and observation checklist from the first cycle and the second cycle. The students could easier memorize the words they learnt. They also felt challenging and interesting. Therefore, the teaching learning process became more enjoyable.

In conclusion, the activities and the result of the test of the first cycle and the

writing the sentence improved by implementing crossword puzzle. The students remembered the words easily through crossword puzzle. Therefore, the researcher has concluded the action hypothesis which states "Crossword Puzzle can improve the students' vocabulary in the students' ability in understanding and writing sentences based on Irregular Verb and Regular Verb of the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak in academic year 2016/2017" is proven.

second cycle have improved. Therefore, the action hypothesis of this research that has been proved that crossword puzzle can improve students' vocabulary in understanding and writing sentences in past form to the ninth grade students of MTsN 1 Pontianak.

Suggestions

Based on the research findings, the writer would like to propose some suggestions to improve teaching learning process especially teaching vocabulary by using riddle game. The suggestions are defined as follows: (1) It is suggested to English teacher to apply crossword puzzle with Classroom Action Research, because it was proved that applying crossword puzzle could increase students' vocabulary in term of understanding and writing sentences in past form. (2) The teacher should prepare an attractive media such as colorful irregular verb list, slide shows power point presentation or attractive games. So students can enjoy the activities in teaching and learning. (3) While implementing crossword puzzle, the teacher should give more control and guidance to the students while they are working in pairs. It can help to build a good teamwork. (4) In improving students' understanding and writing sentences through crossword puzzle, the teacher should consider the appropriate

verb. The teacher should be careful in giving a clue to guess the meaning of the sentence. There are some suggestions for other researchers: (1) They can use this research as additional information. The other researcher can make several clues like pictures related to the topic. (2) Since this research was conducted in Junior High School especially at the ninth grade students, it is suggested for the researcher to implement this research in Junior High School at the seventh or eighth grade students. They also can conduct the research in Senior High School or Vocational High School.

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